

Castlevania Notes

[text in addendum, for clarification or afterthought purposes will be denoted in square brackets]

Prelude: I am still relatively sick going into this, so I have to warn that my thoughts won't necessarily be the most cogent. The second thing I want to say is that I'm pretty much entirely unfamiliar with castlevania [as a franchise/property/ip/etc.] I think some of the characters are in Smash [bros., from what I can remember,] and if I understand correctly, the games are part of the "Metroid-vania" sub-genre. I did a TTRPG thing with Gabriel one time that they said was inspired by it [castlevania], so iirc, there's something to do w/ bloodlines and lineage/generationality. I know generally the aesthetic/sort of setting (time-wise), but beyond all of what I've just listed (which I believe to be not much, but what do I know), there is nothing else that I know going in. especially about the show, im flying totally blind on that.

[season 1]

Ep 1 [Witchbottle – for future purposes, title will not be placed in square brackets since it was never present in my notes and thus will always be an addendum]

- I think there is something v[ery] fascinating about this dichotomy of science + superstition – they are [both] v[ery] historically and politically charged concepts [the next two words are unintelligible]
 - Also im instantly thinking about this framing of "knowledge of the immortals" when scientific rev. et al (as these [scientific mechanisms] seem reminiscent of) would have been relatively recent contemporaneous advancements (I think at least)
 - There's also the tantalizing concept of immortality and how that bumps up against historical placement etc. [from what I can tell so far, the show doesn't really explore this, which is fine]
- If my knowledge of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* [the book] serves me correctly, it was indeed precedent for religious elite to tinker in the way of science and alchemy
- I feel like maybe I'm meant to watch this in English, but I only have the Japanese version rn, so oh well 🙄♀
- The return to the burnt house set up is reminiscent of the movie *Kuroneko*
- Fine, teleportation is really cool or whatever
 - Blood rain as well
- Yikes! Very gruesome

Ep 2 Necropolis

- I have now switched over to English audio, let's see where the vibe goes from here
- Serfs complaining about divine rule; based
- The English VA is much [~] better than the Japanese ... more rich and voluminous [from what I can tell, this sort of goes in and out]

- This is fun. Im not lucid but this is fun
- Whip fight is v cool (>>> Indiana Jones) [I don't really know what that means]
- I think the violence is maybe a little gratuitous at times, but we'll see how things shake out
 - I love how as soon as I started writing that, one of the characters says, "the violence wasn't necessary, sir"
- Im loving all the textures of this world – all the magic and sociopolitics etc. [perhaps I spoke prematurely, alas]
- Belmont va, though, a bit weak-er
- The animation on the interior of the speaker lounge is kind of strange (only ever shows three people despite apparently being a full room of twelve)
 - The show ingeneral wavers from corner cutting to exquisite (semi) [unintelligible] animation

Ep 3 Labyrinth

- I see this ep is called "labrynth" and am very excited (I love mazes! :3)
 - (3 minutes left, and im feeling like this labyrinth isn't coming anytime soon... you it didnt rlly ☹️🙋♀️)
- I gotta say, I rlly like belmont's big coat
 - The weight and physics of it are so fun
- Okay, okay.. cyclops seems hype
 - And seems like it has a medusa beam too (which is something im always a fan of)
- The political game of excommunication has always intrigued me
- This show is giving ~ masque of the red death (more so the movie than the story, but maybe a bit of both)
- Speakers are a premise I (still) find intriguing – what with their ancestral knowledge and seeming analogousness to indigeneity

Ep 4 Monument

- That looks like ~ more than a "kiss"
- Yeah okay femme speaker is cool 🙋♀️
- It's a little bit funny how easily every surface in the entire world seems to disintegrate at the slightest touch
- Lithe vampire [alucard] do be sexy, I wont lie
 - I love how lanky body + weapon are
- Alucard/Dracula has always cracked me up
- Castlevania original generational trauma perhaps

Start of Season 2 // Ep 5 War Council

- Ooh, flashback?
- I need a dr. tepes in my life ASAP

- o The student health center on campus is closed indefinitely and I don't have the necessary paperwork, so im on my own until I return to USA [this was written while I was still very sick and still in the UK]
- This is somewhat redundant, though, since we already knew all of this
 - o I give it a pass because it's the first ep. Of s2
 - o [also in hindsight redundancy is a very dumb gripe when it comes to plot construction – because the reintegration of information and chronologies can be a very helpful device for meaning making]
- Whoah! Looks like decent representation in the dracula's ranks – dang, im kinda surprised
- The backstory/set up on the generals was really well done [as I transcribe this, I gotta be honest, I don't really remember any of these details, so...]
- Alucard will maybe never stop being funny to me
- Ooh, zombie forge that was super neat!
- Moving castle mode is also incredibly cool
- >> it should be stated before we get too much further that this is giving me high JoJo s1 vibes
 - o But maybe that's a chicken and egg situation

Ep 6 Old Homes

- Alucard + Belmont have a funny kind of chemistry
- Carmilla, eh? I sense a fave of maniha? (at least in theory)
 - o Being a bicon etc. etc.
- New take: Dracula is climate change [I will not elaborate]
- Mage lady has the coolest, most dynamic fighting fight me on it
- Ooh, a flagellant. That's really neat
 - o You don't see as many of those as you could these days
 - o Another gay? 2 in one episode?
- Flagellant character is the most interesting one so far to me
- This vampire weakness/running water discussion is cool as well

Ep 7 Shadow Battles

- I had been having consistent quality issues on Netflix, so im switching (back) to pirate site, hopefully this fixes it
 - o One downside is no more subtitles
- The dog revive opening? Super good
 - o Im convinced the JUDAS humans are going to be the most fascinating to watch
- Im having trouble w/ the audio mixing
 - o The voices too quiet, so I turn the volume up but then the fighting/environmental interactions are suddenly super loud
- The main three? Good rapport, eh?

- I feel like the church HAS to be WAY more powerful than we've seen so far if they could sauce the Belmonts who could theoretically sauce Dracula
- New whip! (much cooler mode unlocked)
- There are a lot of cursed animations/faces in this show
- 🙄 carmilla super speed 🙄
 - o very girl boss origin story
- Also, falling down spiral stairs is top 10 things you can do

Ep 8 Broken Mast

- Godbrand is someone who im both interested in and don't care at all to learn more about
- Can we just say that drac's castle's architecture is so amazingly awesome
- Carmilla is ... she's got some problems
 - o But her ability to teleport through shadows is neat [a thing that will definitely come back in the show]
- This is just me remembering but aren't there other houses in this world too? Im interested in that [a thing that will definitely come back in the show]
- Isaac backstory, pog [about getting to find out, the backstory itself is very sad]
- Vampire house, neat
- I didn't think I would be, but im kind of team drac
 - o I can change him. I can change him 😊
- Forge guy ND/ASD? Something to think about
 - o Drac + Isaac chem is <3 <3 <3
- The vampires from around the world I feel are going to be so cool to learn and see more about [😬😬]
- Mfw depression; mfw vampire depression [wait... what if depression is heritable; I only just did 2 +2 on alucard also getting vampire depression]
 - o Kinda real fr. Big if true. So. Me. moment
- [read as a sports chant] Isaac! Isaac! Isaac! Kill godbrand. Get his ass.
 - o Im officially 100% team Isaac

Ep 9 Last Spell

- Yes >:) dispose of Godbrand's ashes like a boss.. you go off Isaac
- Okay, the box of penis spells crack me up
 - o That is exactly what id expect from the French belmonts to have stashed away [for reference because it is not maybe that memorable, there is a throw away line that says that the Belmont library has an entire box for penis related spells]
- Im down if the main three get shipped [😞]
- Im over Hector, he's lame now
- Isaac joking about hay Christian elite 😎

- Generational storytelling, of course, works well b/c the story is theoretically dealing w/ time on an altogether different scale (infinity / deathless vamps / etc.)
 - That's the whole point, I assume
 - [as it turns out, this is not something that the show is leaning into, which is fine; it's exploring other assets of its domain]
- I wish there was more research hijinx but what can you do?

Ep 10 The River

- As this one loads up, I wanna say that the structural pacing of each episode has felt quite a bit slapdash so far; maybe an acclimation issue?
- Ooh, I like the witch doctor/feathery bad guy [this is a one off enemy, but still one of the coolest designs, imo]
- This is a good character moment for Belmont
- Failing to bolt the door was hehehe [hard to explain; there was a visual gag where Belmont tried to bolt a door with a piece of wood but kept failing in a slapstick sort of way]
- Castle teleport is till verrrry cool (a bit less well done this time, but it is what it is)
- I feel like the consecrated whip would be stronger, no? isn't it a 1-shot (genuine question) [genuine answer: it appears that the metal whip is also consecrated? Not clear though]
- Tbh I don't understand vampire court politics... at all at all...
- Revived bishop turning water [into holy water] is sick
- If the international vampires died before they could do anything, id be so upset [😞]
- Im so hypre for bone mask bird [rip bone mask bird]
 - Design 100 ; fighting 100; movement 100
 - Oh it died ☹️
- Idk if it's bad, but trevor gives me loose cam vibes – like I could see you saying a decent number of his quips/1-liners [no comment]
- I feel like carmilla probably has a point, but that is also to say that there remain many that she doesn't have either
- Lady witch... lady witch.. let's go lady witch [i think that I am referring to sypha here; I believe this was in my, I didn't know her name/ how to spell it era]
- I will finally acknowledge the epicness of the d20 shape used to teleport... its epic.
- "nobody takes my castle from me" im grinning, this is so cool :D :D :D
 - Steal the castle! >:) yesss let's goooo!
- Vampires jumping backwards is cursed
- The sad truth of libraries in fantasy worlds is that they almost always end up in flames :([omg, this one hasn't so far, that genuinely surprised me]

Ep 11 For Love

- The castle geometry, man, im telling you [it looks so freaking sick]

- Uh oh. That blood moon doesn't look good
- Another pause to acknowledge the speaker coolness. This idea of collective stories from the past and present is so cool. But at the same time I worry it won't be used as much as it maybe otherwise could be. There's a very liberating and powerful sentiment in this type of nonchronometric view of time, history, culture, and "progress" but one likely beyond the scope of [an] episodic, linear series
 - [in another world there's a version of this story that plays more lovingly with what makes THIS story and THIS world so special; my biggest complaint is that the show too often leans into the generic, or revels in unexplained/eternally newly introduced facets of its world instead of modulating through the textures it already has – ones unique to it and which could allow for, like I said, powerful and liberating storytelling; there are themes and ideas that this show has the potential to address that not many other media entities do, and yet it feels like it doesn't have the wherewithal to fully breach/approach them]
- Name one vamp w/o major unprocessed trama/issues; ill wait 😊 (forever 🐱)
- Family castle visions that's so sad
 - Alucard, im sorry I laughed at your name; I feel for you
 - [not entirely sure what this is reference to, but im sure it was sad]
- Wait wait wait wait. You're JUST NOW telling me that Alucard has a flying sword!?
- That's the most awesomest weapon yet (and perfect for lanky lithe wiggly boy)
- Officially remedying my prior mistake as I see the new chain appears also to be consecrated or [the] equivalent
- WAIT! HOLD IT! IM JUST NOW LEARNING ALUCARD CAN WOLFIFY TOO!?
- I might have to redo [my] internal tier list soon...
- Smoke vampire: I want to learn more about her [this is the Japanese one – so in a way, this wish came true!]
- It seems they are indeed doing the kill the international vampire [before they contribute anything meaningful to the story] thing I had been worried about
- Isaac has some internalized problems
 - I hope he gets some help!
 - What's new (in the life of a flagellant), I suppose
- [specifically Sypha's] Spellcasting is so well animated it could be in an oddly satisfying video or something
- Indiana Jones boulder but its lava
- Too much to admire everything is so well done
 - Such weight and fluidity to the movements
- Don't kill Dracula pls ☹️ hes so sad
 - He coulda been redeemed I feel like
 - But maybe they don't have therapy here

- Many cursed animations already – walking cycles + faces
- They have good chemistry [alucard, sypha, trevor]; is funnee to see them bicker kekekeke
- Feelin real bad for Isaac right now
 - o Much needed Isaac revenge [against the tyla people who have him his original trauma] fight
 - o [this is a] Real make your haters work for you mindset [moment]
- I don't like Belmont + sypha's pairing that much
 - o Such a lame couple; just be friends! Be a polyam w/ Alucard! Just not this ☹️
- Hector is sub to carmillas dominatrix
 - o Oop! And then he instantly gets collared as I write that...
 - o That's crazy
 - o They said "we makin it textual baybeee"
 - o Pet play too

Start of Season 3 // Ep 13 Bless Your Dead Little Hearts

- Alucard living his best life vinib with nature and all that
 - o Hmm but the inside of the house looks a little bit in disarray, ね
 - o Ooh 🥰 cooking moment, pog; he's cheffing!
 - o Oh. Hes depressed and alone. Dang nevermind
- These night monsters seem very lame
- I just don't like sypha and belmonts chemistry when alucard isn't there to even things out
- SNOW! OH THIS IS GOING TO BE SO GOOD! [...]
- o Anything with snow/in snow is [an] instant +10 points in my book
- Lenore. I wonder if that is an EA Poe/Raven reference
- Im interested in this lady vampire group
 - o My biggest complaint from first two seasons was not enough femmes, so here's to hoping on that
- Im getting anti-eastern Europe vibes from [the culty guys] so far [the original text said "this season," but I think I was just talking about about the religious element]
- The judge seems cool 😊 [...]
- All im saying is that this is only the second or third ep that Belmont has drank beer
 - o [i.e., his being an Alcoholic ™ only exists insofar as we are verbally told that it does]

Ep 14 The Reparation of My Heart

- Hagia Sofia spotted, I think?
- I'm still team Isaac, but I have to say his monsters are less cool than Hector's
 - o In fact, they are quite lame

- There are way more mirrors in this show than I would've expected for something about vampires
 - o They just keep popping up and up and up
 - o [given that vampires are often depicted as being invisible/having no reflection in mirrors]
- Okay I [did in fact just see] a couple of neat monsters [so I take back some of what I said]. A naga, I think (for example)
- Im so confused about the regionality of these accents
 - o It feels Caribbean but this looks as if its meant to be middle east/africa
 - o Tbh though, ive been chalking it up to the show being British-adj in origin
 - o (not an excuse but what feel like the most likely explanation)
- I feel like im going to be team Lenore 😊
 - o She's so cute! 😊 I just wanna hug her :3 😊
- Carmilla's plan is not a good idea though
 - o What are we on?
 - o [i think this was a bit of an overreaction. Her plan seems sort of like generic villain plan; I don't know if its all that much more egregious than that]
- I feel like @ least one vampire should conceive of human as entities which maybe don't deserve to be livestocked/genocided, given the fact that (I think) they all were at least once a human too (and thus should have SOME kind of sympathy for them)
- Every scene with Sypha + Belmont I want only to skip and be over with. so very not for me
- I [think I] like saint-germain; idk how to say it but he ([in combination] with the music in the scene) gives me scooby-doo mystery inc. vibes (which is good)
- I like the fits on these hunter folx [Japanese crew]
 - o Them trying to retcon "alucard" [the name] as being cool and not funny, though, idk yet
 - o This, also, is a good moment (more or less)
 - o Giving Japanese
 - The second I wrote that, [it was] once again confirmed by [dialogue] (names was all I needed to confirm for sure)

Ep 15 Investigators

- Belmont got me zzz... ☐ what even is melatonin?
- I do, at least, appreciate having subtitles now [i returned to the USA by this point, so I once again have access to the show on Netflix, and therefore with subtitles]
- Judge likes tea; noted (I like judge... I just hope hes not evil 😬)
- Bad audio mixing is more noticeable on louder speakers
- Green light/Lovecraftian vibe to the [visitor scene], im here for it
- Describing sypha as "insane" feels icky to me
 - o Coalescing misogyny and sanism, and unjustly so imo

- o (like whats so weird? That shes culturally foreign?)
- Flagellant rep; im IN my seat AND listening
 - o No one can ever convince me that Isaac isn't the most interesting character (and that drac's got a lot going on under the hood)
- Really appreciate the seamless fusion of Christian and Muslim cosmologies. It's smart and important
- Isaac is infatuated with drac and its got him all fucked up
- Lenore! Let's goo! 😊
- Something I was just thinking about. There is a somewhat decent amount of rep in the background characters, however, when it comes to the main, staying alive, active characters, the seem to all be white hegemony w. the exception of Isaac [and that one vampire sister lady] as of rn

Ep 16 I Have a Scheme

- Back 2 Japan crew 😎
 - o Uh oh, this seems historically inaccurate
 - o Im not sure this is what 15th c northern Japanese architecture looked like.... Idk for sure yet [unintelligible]
 - Yeah I think this is like ~50/100 years off; [from what I can tell, this reads as reminiscent of battle of sekigahara (1600)]
 - [in any case, the architecture it is mimicking is clearly sengoku era – which began at around ~1467; however, the show is set in the 1450's]
 - [the whole reason architecture is even a point (which it isn't *really*) is because this Japanese TM style of castle was actual an imported architecture technique that came with the advent of Europeans in Japan during the 1400's. And to position northern Japan as having this is a bit of a harder sell to me since the nation was so centralized in the middle/lower sections of the country; Hokkaido and the north have historically been relatively sparse and continue to house a number of indigenous populations (though they too are being encroached upon now)]
 - o [all of this is to say] western animators don't be orientalist challenge [though the real strike to this claim will come later]
 - o This aside, I can buy into it for now
- Ice castle design is fine, kinda cool, but no Dracula castle
- Oh, [a] sapphic [couple], okay, [I see you], I can dig (better than Sypha + Bel)
 - o But also theyre military elites so... evil [in a moral sort of way]
- Religious cult >:) >>this is fun (defaced christ)
- This season feels way more discontinuous than the others -> there was such a huge shift @ the end of s2 that the show seems to e now totally scrambling to make amends

- o However, its in such a way that it bears little resemblance @ all to season 1 or season 2, so the effect is jarring and uncanny
 - The groundwork was already there and now its built built (selfsame) once again
- Even if this episode was lame and/or boring, I can at least rest easy in knowing that the forgemaster animations are cool
 - o Im always down for cool animations

Ep 17 A Seat of Civilisation and Refinement

- Belmonts VA is more on the miss side of hit or miss for me: he sounds bored and like he's busy with other things a lot of the time
- Im interested in saint germain, what's his deal? [to clarify, what I was interested in was the immortality aspect of his character, something it seems we haven't been given any useful insights into, other than that it exists]
- I like alchemical signs :3
- The writing feels unconvincing for a lot of the dialogue
 - o I usually try to ignore dialogue writing but this feels especially as though you cant miss it
- Training scene w/ alcard is kinda swag
 - o Thruple? Alcard polyam for sure 😊 [👀]
- Infinite corridor idea seems cool
 - o Magic stone is fun too :)

Ep 18 The Good Dream

- [The quest for] Getting shoes is the most I would have expected it part of the show
- What is with all this pet play? Someone has got a kind on the creative team, I swear (jkjk, I don't have a problem with kink representation 😏)
- Lenore is better fem dom than carmilla, change my mind [👀]
- [at this point in my notes, my original pen died, so I switch over to pencil for a while]
- Me when im in a "being slow and tedious" competition and my opponent is Castlevania Season 3: 🤔🤔
- While we're here, my like of Lenore has diminished drastically
 - o And I guess carmilla is kind of better or something?
- This pillowtalk between sypha and Belmont is actually sweet and nice; the first time im genuinely in their camp
- Secret carving of alchemical signs – and this town in general, for that matter – give me (once again) very Mystery Inc. Scooby Doo vibes, and, honestly, I love it for that! [that one singular aspect of that one plot line in season three, that is]
 - o i.e., awesome atmosphere of mystique

- this show's animation budgeting continues to perplex me; aeons of cheap do nothing blah blah generic character basic interactions and then all of a sudden they'll sprinkle in these elaborate spectacles (which border/enter into genuine art at point)
 - speaking of, the trippy alien dream sequence both gives more mystery inc and is quite well done (without being explicitly high budget for the most part)
- huge fan of triangular notebook – also getting saint germain's backstory is neat
 - if not delivered semi-clumsily [I think that's what I wrote, idk, the original text was hard to read]
- This is a very Daosit episode; it's giving dream of the butterfly and Qiwlun (transformation of things)
- Isaac's story + bugeyes once again proving that he is the one with the most nuance and interesting texture and who carries the show's themes [which don't really exist outside of him]

Ep 19 Worse Things Than Betrayal

- ALKARD! [I have no idea the context, but if it clarifies at all, I also wrote in my notes, "taka kinda vibes"]
- There are interesting facets to many of these threads, but I cannot shake the sense that this season is simply spread too thin
- For whatever reason, I actually like this episode's writing and flow a lot more than the others so far, so strike that last point just for this ep.
- Wait.. what if the show found it's groove again? o.O
 - The final test will be whether Lenore is still a bore
- There's a very funny shot that makes Isaac look like a tiny baby next to the lady forgemaster [I am currently too tired otherwise I would go and look for it myself; if you're curious, my notes say that it is around the fifteen minute mark in the episode, if not maybe a minute and a half later]
- Pls don't have the judge be a pedo... pls no [tbh I called this well before it was revealed, but I didn't want to jinx it into existence]
- "death and transformation," eh? Sounds like alchemy/Daoism/ and/or Christianity to me
- Crucified night creature is a sweet image
 - Weve GOTTA be in the good era again, they wouldn't lie to me, would they?

Ep 20 What the Night Brings

- Sapphic love; they so cute! And eep! :3
 - But kinda boring here
- I better see some genuine running water kills before the show is over. The last one didn't count because it was holy water anyways [🙄]
- Fun fact: scheme has neutral to positive connotation in the UK; in fact, there were frequently signs up and around my school that said things such as "student payment scheme" to mean ~ "student payment plan"

- Okay I relapsed: alcard's [section] is kinda a lame ahh section
 - Or very stilted and clunky and unenthused
 - It feels like its ALMOST cool + intriguing but also not at all
- Conceiving of the spread of ideas/information as infection is a potent, well, idea. This is not the best execution ive seen of it, but the base form is vivacious enough on its own that it doesn't REALLY matter [if I remember correctly, this is something to do with the priory and the cultists]
- Me when im in a "repeating myself over and over again" competition and my opponent is CaslteVania Season 3: 🤔🤔
- Hector section does nothing for me, I feel like the purpose is to attempt to curry favor from me for the vampires, but its not doing that
- Sadly this was another fuller-y episode, we were almost shmooving

Ep 21 The Harvest

- But right away! Im once again hooked!
 - It only took the semifinal episode of the season to do so...
- Sauron slave town is a captivating image
- Finally alcard threesome? 🤔
 - What we [I] always have been waiting for!?
- Sypha magic! Yes! Let's go!!
- Hector's kinda cute, no lie (Lenore too fwiw) [...]
- Alcard sex scene is what I always wanted (and needed)
 - He's so hot!
 - [...]
- Huge flying ball of writhing corpses is VERY unsettling. But also so cool
- Atlas gaming 😎
- Lets go Isaac. You got this. Take your time.
- Biblically accurate angel demon is hype
 - A little weak sauce, but cool in principal
 - Being that sypha instakilled one (dang)
- I swear sypha is the strongest character [in the show], or it feels that way
- Unironically, I love how oily + slick all the bodies are in alc's sex scene
- WAIT NO! ISAAC CAN'T LOSE! NOT LIKE THIS!
 - You got this, we can come back, just stay cool.
 - YES!!!! HE DID IT!!
 - That said, all of these now plummeting bodies is maybe even more somber
- Idk about the christ/alkard bondage thing though
 - I knew it was a trap, but im still side-eyng the animation
 - Also, no idea what's going on w/ Lenore, but good for her
 - Molten forest of human trees is so smart of an idea for a visual

- The whole (I think its hell?) visualization, super neat
- OMG! It's Drac and gf!! Whoah!
 - Legit did not expect this, but it makes total sense
- [I didn't put it in my original notes, but I feel I need to take a moment to address the orientalism at play in this episode; there is an unshakeable ickiness to the fact that the to visibly east Asian characters were revealed to be deceitful tricksters who were unable to handle the knowledge of the west by themselves, and who resorted to their sexual exoticness to exploit and inflict violence on the ruling hegemon; this plays into many stereotypes and is an unnecessary depiction. From what it reads, these characters are introduced for the sole purpose of generating growth for Alkard, producing a sexual scene, and then getting killed off. I think there is a lot that can be done with them but I am in no way a fan of how they have been handled here]

Ep 22 Abandon All Hope

- Isaac's the best, hands all the way down
- What I will say though, is that this season nails the experience of playing a (sort of boring) DND campaign
 - o [there's something about the slow slow, nothing progression and then the sudden outbreak of cult stuff and the weird reveals that don't actually work but "technically" do if you squint; where you have so sigh and say, yeah sure I guess that makes sense]
- Oh... the judge was evil, wasn't he ☹
- The regeneration animation [in this show] is [always] so satisfying
- Oh! And now there's two whips
 - o I don't remember if I had said it but ive been rooting for the return of the leather whip for a while
 - o And this is sort of the perfect way to do so
- Bye drac, see you later (i really hope we do)
- Ope! Back to bdsm alkard [why is he a bdsm christ? What's up with the over the head crucifixion imagery in this season?]
 - o Umm, but didn't alkard use his magic sword versus [the Japanese duo] before [i.e., during their training]? I know he had used the sword, so I guess the implication is that he never used the magic. [in any case this reveal falls so flat; I never felt like there was a) something missing in alkard's use or lack thereof of magic weaponry, or b) any tension or struggle within alkard about this sword]
 - o Either way, this plot line was not well done and has settled fully into orientalism. Which is sad bc it legitimately could have been so much more interesting
- Christ imagery was cool at first [but it's a bit repetitive at this point]
- Why you gotta be like this, judge?

- Okay, orientalism aside, alkard's threesome/trauma: there's a lot there. If it was handled better, I think it could maybe have approached Isaac levels. Im interested to see where this goes, though [answer: nowhere]
- Lenore modulates between the boundaries of kinky and yikesky, I will keep this in the back of my mind for now

Start of Season 4 // Ep 23 Murder Wakes It Up

- "this could not have gone more wrong, what happened" [this is spoken by sypha after coming out of the burning priory and seeing the destroyed town]
 - o Well a) it could have EASILY gone more wrong. From what I can tell they were still successful in stopping the advance of Dracula; and b) they were so freaking slow and redundant in everything they did [, that im confused as to why this is a question as to causation]
 - o Where I paused belmont is trying to blame their [slowness and lack of results] on belnades, but I watched the show and know instead that a large part of the malaise must have originated non-diegetically
 - Afterall, it infected every thread of season three; blaming it on belnades is a weird move here when the failure is systemic [obviously I understand that Belmont doesn't know about how slow the rest of the season was, but the it isn't really Belmont who's saying these things, it's the show's writers]
 - If there was a more concrete trajectory on the back end, this could have been avoided
 - Simultaneously, because the show was so sluggish, any attempt to try and generate a spool of causality feels inherently faulty (I lost my train of thought but hopefully something here makes sense) [I think the gist is me continuing to be frustrated with season three's construction and execution]
- Ooh, skeleton; iirc, this harkens back to classic castlevania (the game) enemies
 - o Also this is a neat fight scene in general
 - o I love the physics and weight on the morningstar (what with its interactions w/ trees and penduluming around things)
- I don't stand for the sypha retcon nerf
 - o She's still strong but feels weaker; idk ☹
- Hm, more of the green glowing star magic
 - o I was curious about that from the flying sphere
 - o [sadly, we don't get much more of an insight in this season]
- I like [Belmont + belnades'] chemistry better now, or voice acting, I don't know, they flow better
 - o Even when @ each other's throats

- All nitpicking aside, this is an intriguing start to the season so far. It feels like its genuinely setting something up [i.e., it feels like its establishing a trajectory/point toward which it will, with focus, work in the direction of]
 - o I also appreciate that it seems to be earnestly building on the prior seasons and canons [one of my biggest complaints w/ s3 is that it tried to wipe the slate clean on s1 and s2; totally new characters, totally new locations, totally new ambitions and logic and magic capabilities (etc.)]
 - o If s3 was a slow, kind of lame ttrpg, this feels more decidedly like a tv show based on a video game series
- 👁️ forgemaster knife? Another forgemaster coming up? [sadly, it was just an atomic bomb knife 😞]
- Varney seems muy interesante – plus night mayor of London is a fun title
- “the alucard of the castle,” do they know? 🤔 (that alucard is a funny name)

Ep 24

- (im back to pen for the time being – the mechanical pencil was harshing my vibe a tad)
 - o (fun fact about my note taking process, the closer I get to the bottom of the page, the worse by writing gets, but also the larger in scope my thoughts tend to be)
 - (the first of which being causative but the second is moreso correlative)
- While im hesitant bc its hector and we know what happened there, im in general a much bigger fan of the winter castle’s atmosphere in this episode than [what it had in] season three
 - o It feels distinctly composed (and that here means contemplative)
 - o A thing which is helped greatly, I suppose, by the atmospheric music
- Hector on the mirror phone w/ mystery person?
 - o Im intrigued to say the least
- It makes me happy when the show takes time to play around w/ vampire having inverted sleep cycles
 - o When the girls are eepy but its daytime
 - o When someone says “gm :3” but it’s the afternoon
 - o Idk, its nice getting to see [vampires] live their lives and actualize like that
- I have a love/hate relationship w/ Lenore, which is sad b/c I really really want to like her (but, you know...), I also find something slightly discordant about her voice acting and writing but I cant put my finger on it
 - o Nevertheless, my EA poe loving side retains a soft spot
- The forgemaster as masc phallus anxiety is debunked by there being a female forgemaster, no? maybe she’s trans, though, idk
- Even carmilla knows that drac castle >> ice castle 🤔
- I still don’t much care 100% for Carmilla, but this added characterization does leagues to round + flesh her out as a character [in my book]

- o I have a super good feeling about this season!
- New people on good guy's side, and already a fight scene two episodes in a row
 - o Did I accidentally click on the wrong show? 🤖
 - o Im once again in the position of simply having too much to comment on
 - Like, "underground court of targoviste"?
 - So much intrigue, so little time
- Speaking of, this court thing is giving me sus vibes, but in a more intriguing and complex way than the judge

(oh, I don't know where to put it, but I think I was wrong about my comment regarding the show being British before; idk for sure, but I feel like I was maybe wrong; do with that what you will)

Ep 25

- Bugeyes is back at it again; Isaac holds the show together @ its worst AND its best
 - o Im afraid to say it, but im hooked
 - o The city + night creatures are such an excellent foil to isaac's personal struggle
- Its @ the point where I feel almost content in simply sitting and taking in the show; letting the meaning making and entertainment scatter out as they may
 - o Okay, I zoned out a bit when Isaac was inner monologues (I rewound it and it was very exactly what you would have expected to be said given what just happened, e.g., verbal summarization/stating the obvious)
- I love that you can block people on the mirror phone
- Back to the sapphic action 😎
- Day armour, inch resting
 - o Also! finally getting to see vamp lesbians in action
 - o The duo has been too still/backgrounded for too long, I was worried it was going to be another international vampire situation
 - o It looks mega cool; also the raven aesthetic would suggest to me a confirmation on behalf of Lenore's name sake
 - o PLUS!!! Now we are FINALLY getting some humanization of the humans from a vamp character (its like the show listened to me exactly when making this season) [maybe I didn't say it before, but this was something that was really bothering me about the vamp characters]
- The last thing I'll say to this effect is that the show feels as if its been legitimately places within a shell of structural intentions so far

Ep 26

- These crab-type night creatures are cool
 - o As I keep saying (and will eternally continue to), they're giving Scooby Doo Mystery Incorporated

- More importantly, ALKARD! Back and better than ever! (flying and swagging it up and stuff) (now with a shield!? 🙄)
- NOW THIS is a good character moment (I hope)
- And the flying sword can sheath itself? Dang that's neat
- Saint germain is back, okay; im intrigued once again/further
 - o Finally fleshing him out too; dang, everything's getting elevated
 - o [I still want to learn more about his immortality, but I suppose this will do for now]
- The show does a funny thing, I assume it has to b/c of union rules etc.. but whenever there is a minor/background character, they will simply not have a voice @ all, even if being directly talked to [also they lack any grunting or atmospheric noises]
 - o This pattern modulates between muteness and mime-ery
 - o In this episode, this most noticeably applies to saint germain's lady friend
- Infinite corridor is still visually neat
- Escher world is still wackily neat
- Alchemist lady seems like off to a good start in my book
 - o Im pretending that this gives us good representation despite any stereotypes this is playing into
 - o [the death reveal was kind of not surprising tbh]
- *me legitimately taking notes on the alchemy talk for use in my research from last summer*
 - o Kind of buffed up by fantasy etc. but there is something there
- Hmm germain's got layers I didn't expect

Ep 27

- The severed limbs in the spider webs is creepy. Not something ive seen before
- As lame as Hector may be, the animation on his magic is sick (granted, im a sucker for tf)
- Everyone's going on about how apparently the whole world is weak in terms of vampire politics b/c of what happened @ braila... but, only like 7, maybe 10 leaders died. Was there no chain of command? I guess the implication is that every nation had only one vampire (leader), but that reads as weird to me
 - o Like we know all these places still have many vampires, yet at the same time everyone there was apparently fine with having a singular ruler (and that's it?); idk, is all im saying
- Dinesti folk seem cool; refugee background and welcoming to outsiders
- Dinesti lady bi; that's cool I guess
 - o [while I appreciate the show's bi representation, I also realize that it plays into a stereotype of bisexuality; there is something to be said about the fact that (I think) only women are shown as being bi, and that these women are framed as hypersexual or polyamorous etc. (this conflation of monosexuality with being not bisexual)]

- This section is a bit of a lull, but I believe [unintelligible]
- The throw awayness of the monsters eats up all the cool designs; my spider web comment doesn't matter b/c we're already onto the next next next guy
- The animation foible from the season 1 speaker's house has returned in full force (the show struggling to animate scenes in ways that depict how many people are present there)
- Nvm, I don't like dinest lady b/c she didn't like the castle 🙄 (/joking)
- Ooh, weird parasite nail 👁️ this is a trope I like a lot
- Yes.. >:) Isaac, get their asses >:D

Ep 28

- I am sooo here for Isaac monster v/ vampire fight. This is sick!
 - And in the snow! With the billowing winds!
 - Its animated really well so far. Im going to shut up for a moment to enjoy it
- Oh no... carmilla is so powerful 🤔
- Okay, well maybe hector wasn't as mid as I thought
 - Cutting off the finger I saw coming but this was more gruesome than I had anticipated
- This show has very amazing teleportation magic; it makes it look so cool in every form
 - [i.e., the animation and sound design on whenever someone is teleporting has a kind of physical oomph and satisfaction to it]
- *sigh* carmilla fighting in a veritable pool of blood, which overflows into the hallway and down the stairs, is very cool or whatever 🙄
 - Blood red eyes are muy intense as well
- Our first genuine duel!
 - And accompanied by a fittingly epic swelling score to boot
 - That said, im so team Isaac you wouldn't even believe. It doesn't matter who he was fighting, I am on his side
 - The angles and intensity on carmilla totally sell it
- Post explosion there is too much thoughts for words
 - Lesbians; near-sublimity; ahhh! Its soo good!
- Q: are there queer characters/relationships? A: yes; however Q2: do they get as much screentime and development and plot centrality as the straighties? A2: no, they exist, but in much mor minor fashions
 - Representation is good but as it is, it feels a tiny bit tokenized, just sayin
 - I like what ive got; I wish it was more
- Isaacs arc: 🌈 hectors arc: n
 - Isaac's rejection of Dracula's revival is powerful
 - I feel physically moved for the first time in this show
 - I almost want it to end here

Ep 29

- Floating Ouija map is cool
- Vampire drama 🧛‍♂️🧛‍♂️ that said, top 5 convo; its slow and of minimal substance yet it works and feels real
- Isaac won me over; I didn't actually need to see Dracula come back
- Alucard playing w/ the kids is so cute :3
 - This is a really good season, eh?
- Ooh these bloody sewing folk are creepy/cool/intriguing/fascinating/etc. etc. this will be interesting
- zamfir throning dead bodies was not what I expected; it complicates things and yet makes total sense
 - the anti-priest hatred is of additional interest to me [i.e., that the targovistans killed all their priests]
- its amazing, this was ep. 7 and we've managed to keep things happening and getting set up the whole way though such that it feels both as though the show is exactly where it needs to be and that big things are just around the corner

Ep 30

- I had to pause b4 starting b/c Im worried for everyone's safety :c
- Using a key in mid air is another classic ♥ of mine
- Now would be a good time for an alucard wolfify
 - Its been a long while since we've seen it, so pwetty please 🙄
- Sypha lighting mode: unlocked
- Non-stop action, but also preamble action, so there are few thoughts I have to offer (in a good way, I suppose)

Ep 31

- I will call minor bull on Belmont having the morning star in hand [as he jumps through the mirror]; It was MIA all of last episode, so this is a break in continuity. [I have no doubts that he grabbed it from off the floor offscreen, but as we saw him jump into the portal last ep, the weapon was not in his hand (iirc at least)]
 - Obv I know that its here for signification purposes, but still
- Wait, I blinked and now all of a sudden alucard has angel wings!?
 - [one thing that I will say about this show – for its betterment and detriment – is that it does a really good job at having things happen without need of explanation; characters will develop new powers or evolve in new ways and no explanation is ever given for anything (except when it is, but those parts suck and are incongruous anyways); it makes the world feel more native – the people living there would already know how stuff worked, or if they didn't then it would

be too late bc theyd be dead (plus, if something works, then it works, and there's no two ways about it)]

- And I haven't even had time to express my excitement over them [sypha, trevor, alkard] finally getting their reunion [im excited!]
- Im not sure under what circumstances alucard flies with his sword and which he man handles it. It seems random/inconsistent as of rn (and I desperately want to see more flight)
- Official acknowledgement [by me] of belmont's new weapon as being cool [i.e., the spinning blade thing]
- Teleporting norse vampire is super sick
 - The electric buzz that accompanies him as well
 - Speaking of, I meant to mention it before, but im a big fan of this global representation in this final battle
- The mummy that walks through walls is great too
- Ahh! Im getting a total sensory overload w/ all this transformation and coolness and everything else
- For the record, when I saw the red/black swirl ring on the corpse, I was exceedingly worried that it was Carmilla already back from the dead and was getting angry on Isaac's behalf
- Oh dang the varney reveal
 - The voice is throwing me off, though
 - [this is not what death should sound like]
- Mini-final bosses! Eep, im geeking!
 - Thread/fiber magic is always a highlight for me
 - Ripping off arm as it gets consecrated, that's metal
- Ooh, death being a being that feeds on death is a neat twist (or whatever the word is)
 - Goes to show, season for has a lot going on under the hood
- Explosions have always been one of the show's strongest suits
 - And this episode only goes to confirm that
- Beeg giant versus little tinee guy 🐱🐱🐱

Ep 32

- Even though im seepy eepy im trying to finish this out b/c theres only 1 episode left
- Vampires are big on change, eg (autism moment perhaps?)
- Imma hope back on team Lenore
 - She's very cute here :3 no evil grossness that I can see
 - No wait, don't kill yourself, you're so sexy 😞😞😞😞
- The music has overall been p dang good this season
- "insane" gets thrown around (at women) more than I would otherwise like in this show
- Omg is sypha FINALLY going to reconnect with the other speakers? (forgot the name for a sec)

- o I have been waiting for this moment more than anything else in the show. Since the end of season one (i.e., episode 4)
- o Speakers have so much going on under the hood; its all untapped and I want to finally learn more [tbh sypha is kind of a speaker in name only; her speaker-ness comes up only periodically and in anecdote and when it serves as a punchline and/or maybe for plot progress]
- o OH. MY. GOD. I SWEAR IF HER TRIP GETS INTERRUPTED. NO. PLEASE. EVEN IF ITS “FOR THE BETTER” OR WHATEVER
 - [🤖 🤖 🤖]
- Finally time to comment/complement the art on sypha and alucard’s eyelashes
- Belmont alive is fine, sure, but i believe we lose a lot of depth in this development. But I assume im in the minority (being that I want to see the straights suffer or wtv)
- Abandoning targoviste is a bit of a bummer too
 - o That was an important part of the show that I guess we are glossing over now
- I enjoyed (the end of) my watch, but would I recommend this show to others? Eh, maybe probably not. Season 1, season 2, and especially season 3 are too much of a slog for me to sign my name behind it (personally)
 - o Im definitely glad I made it through, because season four was awesome and there were, in general, cool moments sprinkled throughout, but I don’t think I would watch this show again [at least not as a composed whole]
- Despite what I said @ isaac’s bit, I do kind of like dracula’s redemption and reconnection
 - o Love to see a sad boy happy (and winning)
 - o If getting Belmont back is what it takes, fine, I guess that’s alright
 - o [but in a truly ideal world, I would prefer both being dead]
- Lisa tepes said ACAB 🙄

And with that, this marks the end of my notation journey. I don’t plan on writing anything else on the show at this moment. If I do, I will obviously send it to you, but for now, this will have to do. I’m sorry if this reads as overly critical or harsh – I would like to blame the format as active note taking makes me interact with something differently than I would if passively watching. Hopefully it doesn’t get in the way of your experience here. Was it my favorite show? Nah. Do I have serious and minor criticisms of the show? Definitely. But did I enjoy it and were there things that I loved getting to watch? I’d have to say yes. I don’t think this is me coping or storkholming or anything, either. There’s simply a lot to natively appreciate.

The end.